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LETTER DATED 20 JUNE 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 17 June 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the resolution of the Council of Arab Economic Unity of 3 June 1998, which calls for the lifting of the embargo imposed on Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 17 June 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to submit to you a copy of Council of Arab Economic Unity resolution 67/1078 entitled "Alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people", which was adopted by the Council at its sixty-seventh session, held in Cairo from 3 to 4 June 1998; this resolution calls for the lifting of the embargo imposed on Iraq for more than eight years, as Iraq has fulfilled its obligations in full, and lifting the embargo would have a positive effect on the Iraqi people, as well as on the strengthening of Arab economic integration.

You are undoubtedly aware of the extent of the serious and daily worsening effects of the continuing comprehensive embargo imposed on Iraq. These effects are reflected in the human suffering of the Iraqi people, particularly children, women and the aged, suffering to which the whole world stands witness. The embargo has also halted Iraq's development process, as it has been prevented from rebuilding its economic and developmental infrastructure, which was completely destroyed as a result of the war and the long years of embargo.

The resolution of the Council of Arab Economic Unity clearly expresses what is a tangible fact for the Arab States in particular, namely, that the embargo includes not only Iraq, but also directly affects Arab economic integration, as Iraq constitutes an essential element of joint Arab action for development and progress.

The continuing embargo and the impeded development process in Iraq and the Arab nation as a whole are manifestly incompatible with all international customs and instruments and with the clearly stated purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. They are also incompatible with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as article 1, paragraph 2, of the Covenant affirms that "All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic cooperation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence."

The continuing imposition of the no-fly zones, which was rejected by the resolution of the Council of Arab Economic Unity, is a flagrant breach of the provisions of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as it represents the use of armed force against Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. Furthermore, this hostile action, which has no legal basis and which is not covered by any of the resolutions on Iraq adopted by the Security Council, is a unilateral measure that the United States has attempted to portray as being authorized by the United Nations.

Day after day, events prove that the determination of the United States to impose the no-fly zones and maintain the unjust embargo imposed on Iraq is a blatant intervention in the internal affairs of Iraq and a desperate attempt to impose its will and control over Iraq and the entire region.

The resolution of the Council of Arab Economic Unity shows the Arab rejection of such a measure, which constitutes a dangerous precedent in international relations and undermines the credibility of the United Nations, as well as its status worldwide.

Through you, Iraq calls upon the United Nations to act with responsibility emanating from the principles of its Charter and the rules of international law with a view to lifting the comprehensive embargo against the people of Iraq and halting all behaviour and actions which violate Iraq's sovereignty, airspace and territory and which are manifestly incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations.

I request the circulation of this document and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq

Enclosure

Resolution 67/1078 of 3 June 1998

General policies

2. Alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people

The Council of Arab Economic Unity,

Having considered Council resolution 54/959 of 5 December 1991, resolution 59/1000 of 7 September 1994, resolution 60/1010 of 4 December 1994, resolution 61/1019 of 7 June 1995, resolution 62/1029 of 6 December 1995, resolution 63/1033 of 5 June 1996, resolution 64/1042 of 4 December 1996, resolution 65/1053 of 4 June 1997 and resolution 66/1065 of 2 December 1997,

And the decision of the Committee of Delegates of Permanent Representatives (as a preparatory committee) at its meeting in Cairo on 2 June 1998,

HAS DECIDED

1. To affirm the previous resolutions of the Council and to call for the lifting of the embargo imposed on the Republic of Iraq for over eight years, as lifting the embargo would have a positive effect on the Arab Iraqi people and on the strengthening of Arab economic integration and would alleviate the suffering of our brother Iraqi people, who are enduring material, human and moral harm as a result of this embargo;

2. To call for the immediate implementation of paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the lifting of the comprehensive embargo against Iraq, since it has fulfilled its obligations in full;

3. To reject the no-fly zones imposed on areas of Iraq, as their imposition violates the rules of international law and has serious and adverse repercussions on the economic and social situation of the Iraqi people;

4. To affirm the call of the Arab States for the adoption of appropriate measures to increase commercial dealings with Iraq that will inevitably help to alleviate the effects of the embargo;

5. To request the Secretary-General to instruct the Council to monitor implementation of its resolutions by Member States and submit a report on the subject to the Council at its next session.